

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00866 140509Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 AGR-01 /092 W  
-----085565 140514Z /12

R 140430Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9492  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0866

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, EGEN, LA  
SUBJECT: CO-OPS AND COMMUNES IN NORTHERN LAOS

REF: VIENTIANE 748

1. A WESTERN SOURCE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A TRIP UP THE NAM OU RIVER IN NORTHERN LAOS REPORTS THAT THE LAO GOVERNMENT'S COOPERATIVE PROGRAM (REFTEL) IS JUST BARELY GETTING UNDER WAY. SO FAR, THE LPDR'S EFFORTS HAVE BEEN AIMED AT UPLAND LAO. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO DO AWAY WITH SLASH AND BURN AGRICULTURE, BRING PEOPLE DOWN TO THE LOWLANDS, AND SETTLE THEM IN AREAS WHERE THEY CAN ENGAGE IN WET RICE CULTIVATION.

2. THE AREAS VISITED BY OUR SOURCE ARE DOWNSTREAM FROM THE VICINITY OF TJ72 AND WERE UNDER PATHET LAO CONTROL FOR MANY YEARS. THE LOCAL PEOPLE THUS LOOK AT THE CURRENT LPDR ADMINISTRATION AS THEIR OWN, AND FOR  
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THEM THE END OF THE FIGHTING HAS MEANT THE CESSATION OF FAR BOMBING ATTACKS. THEY DO NOT LOOK UPON THE LPDR AS CONQUERORS, AS DO THE PEOPLE IN THE VIENTIANE PLAIN, NOR DO THEY COMPARE THEIR CURRENT SITUATION WITH A MORE PROSPEROUS, COMFORTABLE PAST.

3. DESPITE THESE PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGES, THE LPDR'S

PROGRAM HAS YET TO HAVE MUCH EFFECT. WHERE FAVORABLY SITUATED LAND IS AVAILABLE ALONG THE RIVER, AND WHERE THE PROSPECTIVE SETTLERS ARE NOT TOO REMOTE AND INACCESSIBLE, THE PROGRAM IS MAKING A GOOD START. MUCH HAS TO BE DONE, HOWEVER, IN TELLING PEOPLE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF LOWLAND LIFE AND TRAINING THEM IN THE NECESSARY TECHNIQUES. MUCH MORE HAS TO BE DONE IN REACHING THOSE IN REALLY REMOTE AREAS, SUCH AS TRIBAL PEOPLE, WHO HAVE YET TO BE AFFECTED OR EVEN TOUCHED BY THE LPDR RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM.

4. COMMENT: THE SOURCE'S REPORT IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION. DESPITE UPBEAT STORIES IN THE LAO MEDIA, WE GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE LAO GOVERNMENT'S COOPERATIVE PROGRAM HAS YET TO HAVE MUCH EFFECT IN THE MEKONG VALLEY. THIS IS JUST AS WELL, SINCE ITS THEORETICAL BASIS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION ARE TOTALLY INAPPLICABLE TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF LOWLAND LAO LIFE.

5. THIS IS NOT THE CASE IN THE AREAS VISITED BY OUR SOURCE. LEAVING ASIDE THE MARXIST-LENINIST JARGON IN WHICH IT IS COUCHED, THE PROGRAM COULD PROVIDE A BETTER LIFE FOR THE UPLAND PEOPLE AT WHOM IT IS AIMED. IT COULD ALSO DO SOMETHING ABOUT REDUCING THE DASTROUS ECOLOGICAL EFFECT OF SLASH AND BURN AGRICULTURE

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BY A GROWING POPULATION. THE REAL PROBLEMS WILL COME, HOWEVER, WHEN AND IF THE PROGRAM REACHES NON-LAO TRIBAL PEOPLE. AS IN THE ONGOING CASE OF THE HMONG, THEY RESIST ASSIMILATION AND THEY DO NOT LOOK UPON LPDR OFFICIALS AS THEIR OWN.

ROBERTS

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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